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POLITICAL SCIENCE AS A UNIVERSITY STUDY

One of the ways in which the advance in human knowledge may be measured is in the number and character of the new sciences that are created and recognized as subjects worthy of treatment in higher institutions of learning as distinct educational disciplines. Thus the old *trivium* and *quadrivium* of mediæval days have given way to the elaborate curricula of modern universities and colleges. In general, this establishment of new departments of learning has taken the form not of the creation of wholly new sciences, but of the differentiation of older departments of inquiry into distinct lines of research and thought. A conspicuous instance of this process has been witnessed in this country during the past twenty years within the field of the so-called social sciences. The late Professor H. B. Adams has shown in his monograph "The Study of History in American Colleges and Universities," how recent has been the establishment in this country, even in our largest institutions, of independent chairs of history, the incumbents of which are required to be scholars specially trained for their work. Still more recent has been the recognition of Political Economy as a distinct educational discipline; while it is only within the last ten, or even five years, that Political Science has been marked off as a study which by its methods and subjects of inquiry requires for its successful study separation from the other social sciences, and especially from History and Economics with which it has been, and still is, in considerable measure, so closely allied. Within

these few years, however, this movement has been very marked, and the number of independent departments and professorships of Political Science in our colleges and universities is rapidly increasing. In 1884 the American Historical Association was founded and in 1885 the American Economic Association established, each of which national societies includes within its membership practically all of the American scholars within their respective fields of inquiry. Until 1903, Political Science was without a national association to represent its especial interests. In that year there was established the American Political Science Association, which had an immediate success and now has more than three hundred members, a very considerable portion of whom are actively engaged in teaching in our colleges and universities. The successful establishment of this Association is undoubtedly the most important event that has occurred in the history of the scientific study of matters political in this country. It indicates the definite recognition of the fact that Political Science, by its problems and by its methods, requires to be studied as a separate department of knowledge.

The aim of Political Science is, as its name indicates, the scientific study of matters political. A matter is political when it has reference to the State, — to its nature, its right to be, its forms of organization, its activities, its ends. The State is a group of individuals viewed in a particular aspect, that is, viewed as an organized unit subject to the authority of a supreme will which is the source of all law. The State as thus the possessor of a supreme will, is said to be a political or legal person. The organization through which it expresses and executes its will is termed its government. The commands which it either directly expresses or accepts as the expression of its will, are known as laws. These laws are in turn divisible into public and private, and these in turn into still more special classes. We thus see that, generally speaking, there are three great topics with which the political scientist has primarily to deal: State, Government, Law. In so far as law relates to the determination of the form of government that shall exist, and the statement of the powers and responsibilities of the agents that operate it, it is termed constitutional, and where it relates to the details of administration, ad-

ministrative law. Where it relates to the rights and duties of States *inter se*, it is known as international. These three kinds of law — constitutional, administrative, and international — are so directly concerned with the State and its interests, that they are generally recognized to be subjects that require academic treatment.

Private law, namely, that law which relates to the respective rights and duties which obtain between individuals, is usually handed over for study to purely professional schools whose aim it is to fit their students for the practice of the law. In truth, however, the private law, in order to be fully mastered, needs as scientific, as philosophical, a treatment as does any of the other branches of the law, or, indeed, as does any of the other social or exact sciences. This has long been recognized in Europe where law ranks as one of the four great faculties into which the universities are divided, — medicine, theology, and philosophy constituting the other three. And in this country, though the movement has as yet gained but little headway, the tendency is to approach the continental practice. At the universities of Yale, Michigan, Wisconsin, Missouri, Cornell, and Columbia, academic students are permitted to take law courses which count toward the A.B. degree, and at the same time toward the LL.B. degree, if, after graduation, the law course is pursued. At the University of California and the Stanford University, these law courses may be elected by the student during the second, third, and fourth years, and, moreover, at these universities the schools of law appear as regular academic departments. For the present, however, and probably for some considerable time in the future, the teaching of private law in this country will in the main be given not in the departments of Political Science in our academic institutions, but either in wholly separate professional schools, or in departments of law in our colleges and universities which are sharply separated from the other academic departments of instruction.

Returning then to Political Science, we find that, excluding private law, we may group its inquiries under two main heads: First, the study of the State; second, the study of Government. The study of the State involves an examination of its nature and

of the principles which control its actions. Thus we have the three special subjects of (a) Political Theory or Philosophy, (b) Constitutional and Administrative Law, (c) International Law.

Constitutional and Administrative Law, as we have already seen, comprise those laws which control the action of the State in its relation to its own citizens, and towards others temporarily subject to its authority. International Law is the name given to those rules (whether or not they are *in sensu stricto* laws we need not now consider) which govern the relations of States *inter se*.

Political Theory or Political Philosophy is concerned with the essential nature of the State, the discovery of those characteristics by the presence of which its existence may be determined, and by the possession of which it may be distinguished from other forms of aggregate human life. The value of this purely abstract study, which unfortunately has been too much neglected in this country, it is difficult to over-estimate. Political theorizing until well into the Nineteenth Century was very largely of what the Germans term *naturrechtliche* character. Its aim was the establishment of certain principles founded on a doctrine of natural rights which, it was deemed by their authors, should govern the State in the exercise of its powers. As the determination of what these natural rights were lay almost wholly within the arbitrary opinion of each writer, the results not only differed widely from one another, but were ascertained, and their application demanded, with but little regard to special conditions of time and place. As long as political speculations maintained this subjective character, the results to which they led were of comparatively little scientific value, and it is not surprising that Burke should have described them as "the Great Serbonian bog 'twixt Damiata and Mt. Cassius old, where armies whole have sunk." But at the present day, political theory, though still, of course, abstract, as is all theory, is no longer subjective, or metaphysical. It has become analytical. It examines the different forms of political life which the world exhibits, or has exhibited, and from this examination conducted with logical accuracy and acuteness, it discovers those essential criteria which enable it to formulate valid definitions, and,

based upon those definitions, to establish exact classifications. It thus furnishes the propædæutic of a true political science. It supplies, in short, the true logic of constitutional and international law. It enables the constitutional jurist to develop the legitimate powers of his government in strict consonance with the premises and conclusions previously established; and makes it possible for the statesmen in charge of foreign affairs correctly to interpret the complex international world and thus to deduce the respective rights and obligations which flow from the many forms of political life and interstate federations and alliances which are presented to him. Upon this point the writer takes the liberty of quoting a paragraph from a paper published by him several years ago.¹ After calling attention to the complexity of modern international life with its federations, alliances, colonies, protectorates, spheres of interest, leases of territory, etc., the writer there said: "It is not difficult to see that, if these various conditions and problems are to receive satisfactory classification and interpretation, and if general principles are to be deduced in accordance with which future complications are to be judged, the essential foundations and characteristics of sovereignty must be examined. We must determine what powers and attributes are essential to the possession of sovereignty; whether its existence is an infallible and necessary test of statehood; to what extent the exercise of its powers may be delegated without parting with its possession; the distinction between governments *de facto* and governments *de jure*; whether States may be created by international compact; whether the origin of political authority in general is susceptible of a juristic interpretation; what is the essential character of positive law and whence its validity; and to what extent so-called international law is law at all. . . . All of these are problems for the solution of which recourse must be had to abstract political philosophy."

It is an interesting fact, especially to those of the South, that in this country, John C. Calhoun was the first to apply with accuracy and acumen this modern analytic method to the solution

¹"The Value of Political Philosophy" in the *Political Science Quarterly* for March, 1900.

of the problems involved in our own federal system of government. The accuracy of his analysis and definition of sovereignty cannot be questioned, and the theoretical conclusions which he drew therefrom were obtained by flawless logic. Demonstrating that sovereignty by its very nature means absolute legal omnipotence, and that, as such, it is inalienable and indivisible, he showed that, granting the historical premise that the States were sovereign in 1789, they could not, by a compact between themselves, have transferred this sovereignty, either in whole or in part, to the general government. It is the irrefutable character of this reasoning that has forced most of those who have upheld the sovereignty of the United States since the establishment of the constitution to deny what most of them, previously to Calhoun's time, had admitted, that the States were severally sovereign during the period from 1776 to 1789. Calhoun, thus, whatever we may think of the practical policies which he advocated, deserves beyond question to rank as the founder of the modern school of political philosophers in this country.

Leaving now the discussion of the three fields of Political Philosophy, Constitutional and Administrative Law, and International Law, into which the general study of the State is divisible, we turn to a consideration of the topics embraced within the study of Government, the second of the two great subjects with which Political Science as a university study has to deal. Here the method of study is more descriptive than analytical, more directly practical than speculative. The work resolves itself into an examination of the various existing and historical types of political machinery through which the State operates or has operated,—of federal and unitary, centralized and decentralized, absolute and limited, direct and representative, national and colonial, parliamentary and presidential forms of government. These governments are studied not only to discover their morphology or structure, but to ascertain the ways in which they actually operate, the merits and defects which they exhibit, and the circumstances under which, respectively, they may be expected to produce good or bad results. Along with this study of government goes properly the study of political parties, the

forms of organization that they assume, and the forces that operate them. Descending from these general to more particular questions, each specific problem of administration furnishes a topic for special treatment. Thus there are the problems of colonial government and administration, of municipal government, of civil service, of primary elections, of proportional representation, of the referendum, of state or city ownership of public utilities, of the state regulation of the economic, social, and ethical interests of the citizen, and also the larger problems of national policies in the field of world politics. Political Science may never hope to produce an art of statesmanship which will furnish the citizen and the public official with the exact guidance that the chemist, the physicist, or the mathematician furnishes to those in the technological trades, but it may and does furnish information of extreme value — information absolutely indispensable to those who are called upon to play any part either in the formulation or execution of public policies, or in selecting those who do. Academic training cannot make unnecessary a practical experience in politics, but it can furnish the knowledge which renders one able correctly to learn the lesson of that experience and intelligently to apply that lesson when learned.

Properly pursued, Political Science requires the employment of both the historical and the comparative methods. Foreign systems of public jurisprudence and foreign governments and methods of administration require to be studied in order that there may thus be obtained the data upon which the analytical method may be employed, and in order that practical principles of statesmanship and public policy may be safely declared. From the centralized systems of Europe, the sources of administrative efficiency are discovered. From the working of the parliamentary system in England and on the Continent, the merits and defects of our own presidential system are made more evident. From the interpretations which written constitutions have received abroad, assistance is derived in the construction of our own instruments of government. In this connection, it is to be observed that our own country offers unexampled opportunities for the comparative study of political questions in that we have here of our own forty-six complete systems of government in practical

operation, one federal and forty-five state governments, not to speak of the territories and insular dependencies. It has been said, and with truth, that Aristotle was able to prepare his wonderful work on Politics because he had at hand several hundred distinct Hellenic constitutions and governments to study. In America we are almost as fortunate, having almost a surfeit of material awaiting scholarly, scientific treatment.

Though Political Science, both by the material with which it has to deal, and by the special problems which it has to solve, occupies a field definitely marked off from the other social sciences, and especially from History and Economics, it yet is a subject, the study of which must ever remain closely allied with them. Here again it is hoped that the writer will be pardoned if he reproduce words which he has employed upon a previous occasion.² "Of the relation between History and Political Science it has been said by the late Sir John Seeley that politics without history has no root, and that history without politics has no fruit. The connection between economics and politics is, if anything, more intimate. Without the information that the study of economic principles and of economic history affords, the political scientist is unable either to explain many of the processes of political growth or wisely to determine lines of public policy. Upon the other hand, deprived of the knowledge furnished by the scientific study of the mechanism and methods of operation of governments, the economist finds himself insufficiently informed either correctly to analyze past and existing economic conditions or satisfactorily to devise the means by which the truths that he discovers may be made of practical advantage to mankind. And yet, intimate as are these relationships, the field of political science is one that may be clearly distinguished from that of history as well as from that of economics, and the topics which the field includes, in order to be treated adequately, need to be studied as distinct subjects of inquiry. It is true that to a very considerable extent the phenomena dealt with by the historian, the economist, and the political scientist,

²"The American Political Science Association," in the *Political Science Quarterly* for March, 1904.

respectively are the same, but each examines his material from a different standpoint. The historian has for his especial aim the determination and portrayal of processes and stages of human development. With economic and political interests he is concerned only in so far as it is necessary for him to understand them in order to explain the movements he is studying. So also with the economist. His primary interest is in the ascertainment of the principles that control the production, exchange and consumption of wealth; and he finds it necessary to enter upon political ground only in so far as government has an influence upon economic conditions, either by reason of its cost, the economic security that it gives, or the manner in which it directly interferes, or properly may interfere, in the regulation of the industrial interests of the people. Thus, since neither the historian nor the economist is primarily interested in the study of matters political, it is necessary, in order that these matters may receive adequate scientific treatment, that they should be studied by those whose special interest in them is upon their political side."

This natural and necessary affiliation between history, economics, and politics is well represented in the institution to which the writer belongs. The requirements for obtaining the degree of doctor of philosophy at the Johns Hopkins University prescribe that the student shall take for special study one principal and two subordinate subjects. Almost invariably the student taking one of these three subjects as his principal subject selects the other two for subordinates. Thus, in fact, the three graduate departments, though administratively independent and each under the direction of a different professor, so far as their students are concerned, are almost united into one. In nearly all of the lecture courses and even in the seminars, the students are intermixed. Furthermore, every fortnight, in what is known as the Historical and Political Science Association of the University, all of the instructors and students of these departments meet together for the reading and discussion of formal papers and for the presentation of reviews of current scientific historical, political, and economic literature.

In conclusion of this paper, it may properly be remarked that

the collegiate institutions of the South have failed to recognize to the extent that the institutions of other sections of the country have done, that the field of political inquiry is one which for its successful pursuit requires to be taught, not by the historian or the economist, but by one whose special training and primary interests are in the political field. Yet no part of our country at the present time stands in greater need of exact political thinking and wise political guidance. Industrially, socially, and intellectually, the South is undergoing a rapid development, and this means that her political thinking and her political institutions and laws must be adapted to the new conditions that are being brought into existence. Naturally the people of the South are of superior political ability, and that they will successfully solve the political problems with which they are, and in the future will be, confronted, there can be no doubt. Of this work the academies and colleges should perform their proper share.

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